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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the Hello Reader Scholastic Phonics program as an addition to an already rich, literature-based curriculum. Test data suggested that primary grade students were not developing phonetic skills sufficient to meet district expectations. This research was designed to ascertain the degree to which students' literacy skills are enhanced through implementation of a supplementary phonics program. During the data collection period, first grade students were assessed on selected skills, e.g., letter identification, letter sounds, and pre-primer word identification. Implementation strategies intended to improve skill levels included daily phonics lessons, assessments, making word activities, word walls, word games, partner reading, word sorts, dictations, checklists, Venn diagrams, cooperative group work, and related literature. Results suggest that a combination of a phonics program along with a rich, literature based approach to teaching reading successfully enhanced student growth. The reason the Scholastic Phonics Program can be considered successful is due to the amount of growth the targeted population has made. In past years this amount of growth has been made by the end of the year, whereas the targeted students have accomplished this goal by January. Appendixes contain information on administration and scoring of the Qualitative Reading Inventory II; a list of pre-primer words; teaching strategies; sample lessons; and a reading assessment form. (Contains 13 references and 5 figures of data.) (RS)

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PIECING TOGETHER PHONICS AND WHOLE LANGUAGE: A BALANCED APPROACH

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the Hello Reader Scholastic Phonics program as an addition to an already rich, literature-based curriculum. Test data suggested that primary grade students were not developing phonetic skills sufficient to meet district expectations. This research was designed to ascertain the degree to which students' literacy skills are enhanced through implementation of a supplementary phonics program.

During the data collection period, first grade students were assessed on selected skills, e.g., letter identification, letter sounds, and pre-primer word identification. Implementation strategies intended to improve skill levels included daily phonics lessons, assessments, making word activities, word walls, word games, partner reading, word sorts, dictations, checklists, Venn diagrams, cooperative group work, and related literature.

Results suggest that a combination of a phonics program along with a rich, literature based approach to teaching reading successfully enhanced student growth. The reason the Scholastic Phonic's Program can be considered successful is due to the amount of growth the targeted population has made. In past years this amount of growth has been made by the end of the year, whereas the targeted students have accomplished this goal by January.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem

In a world where education is almost universally available, there are currently more non-literate people than at any other time in history. There are approximately 1 billion non-literate people in the world today (Walter, 1997). The United States ranks last among industrialized nations in literacy rates and that insufficient literacy skills cost American workers more than $335 billion annually. Many of these people are embarrassed to ask for reading help because they believe they are alone in their predicament (Pellarin, 1997). Illiteracy is a problem because it is increasing. For instance, many illiterate people are unable to secure substantial employment to support their families. Millions of Americans are considered to be illiterate. According to a number of surveys, some one in five American adults - more than twenty-five million people - are functionally illiterate. They lack the reading, writing, and computational skills to fill out a job application, read a medicine label, or sit back and study the sports pages of the daily newspapers (Pellarin, 1997). It is the job of the nation to address this issue, hopefully to decrease, and hopefully eliminate, illiteracy in our society.

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the Hello Reader Scholastic Phonics program as an addition to an already rich, literature-based curriculum. This research will show to what extent students' literacy skills might be enhanced due to this supplementary phonics program.

Problem Context

Educators across the nation have long debated whole language versus phonics approaches to acquiring literacy skills. Over the years the pendulum swing has exposed students to both teaching approaches. The phonics approach teaches children to associate letters and units of words with sounds, whereas whole language teaches children to read by encouraging a love of literature (Smolkin, 1999). Researchers have come to recognize, however, that those who teach phonics and those who teach whole language often share similar views and understandings. Some of these similarities include: the first printed words children learn to recognize, such as their names or the word "stop" on stop signs, are read holistically, not letter by letter; early readers read better in context than outside of context; and, early readers comprehend print written with familiar language better than print written with unfamiliar language (Moustafa and Maldonado-Colon, 1999).

Demographics

The district is located in a southwest suburb of Chicago. The following data are taken from the most recent information available, the 1998 School Report Card. Current racial/ethnic background is 96.4% White, 0.4% Black, 1.2% Hispanic, with a total enrollment of 686 students. The percentage of low-income students in the district is 2.2%. The percentage of limited-English-proficient students is 1.7%. The average number of students in a class is virtually identical to the state average, (22.8). The district is significantly higher than the state average for teachers' master's degrees (66.3% against state average of 46.3%). The average third grade IGAP scores for reading and writing are well above the state average. District reading scores average 335 with a

percent score of 89.4% while the state reported scores of 246 and 82.8%. Writing scores reflected similar results. The writing score for the district was 22.8 with a percent score of 88.5%. State scores were 18.7 with a percent score of 82.0%. District third grade IGAP State Performance Standards were well below the state average for those students not meeting goals for reading and writing. In reading, 3% of district students did not meet goals whereas 28% of state students did not meet goals. In the area of writing, all district students met state goals, as compared to 13% of students statewide.

Summary

The finger of guilt points, obviously, to schools. But schools aren't the only culprits. Illiteracy runs in families. Children who are read to, who see their parents pick up a book or a magazine and who are helped with their homework, become adults who read. Literacy is a lifelong pursuit. And unlike riding a bicycle, we can and do grow rusty without practice (Pellarin, 1997). It is obvious how important it is to teach beginning readers the skills they need to be literate in the world today.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

District Review

Through examination of test data, it was apparent that primary grade students were not developing sufficient phonetic skills to meet district expectations. Standardized testing scores indicated that phonetic scores were not meeting district standards. These district standards are much higher than the state's standards. The district strives for excellence above and beyond the state expectations. Previously, the district was exclusively using a literature-based approach to teaching reading. After administration and faculty discussion on how to improve the district's reading and language arts scores, the district set out to find the best program to meet student needs. Several phonics programs were reviewed by the building Reading Specialist to address the problem. After careful consideration, the Principal mandated that first grade teachers would use a specific phonics program entitled Scholastic Phonics Readers, which was to be incorporated into their already rich, literature-based curriculum. According to the publishers, "The purpose of Scholastic Phonics Readers is to provide children with early reading success through independent, sound-controlled reading materials and systematic phonics instruction in the context of a print-rich environment and multiple language experiences" (Scholastic, 1997). Administration and faculty recognized that "the critical juncture comes during the early elementary years, specifically kindergarten and first grade. And students who fall behind early have a hard time catching up later" (Diegmueller, 1996, p.1). These theories seemed to match the needs of the students in the district.

Overview

Phonics skills may impact reading/decoding in future reading experiences. The district is aware that research strongly suggests that many children need explicit phonics instruction. At least one leading expert believes that a combination of the two styles may be the most effective way to teach the beginning reader:

> "In the classroom, when children are learning to read, what they need is not either phonics or whole language, but both phonics and whole language . . . Together is where they belong. If you look at a range of long-term studies of how children learn to read, you reach the inescapable conclusion that early; systematic phonics instruction is beneficial for most students. Likewise, it's also beneficial to give students a rich diet of 'whole language'"(Holdren, 1995).

The district supports a literature-based whole language curriculum. Research indicates that while this is effective, the addition of a phonemic component would add to the success rate of reading skills.

Whole Language/Literature Based Classroom

The whole language classroom is one that provides a variety of experiences through literature-based activities. "Whole Language is a system of combining reading, writing and speaking into one area of emphasis. Essentially, the whole of the language is taught before the parts. Whole Language builds upon the reading and writing skills the child brings from his/her preschool experiences . . . Teachers provide a rich environment of books, magazines, charts, labels, listening centers and other materials that foster the children's enjoyment of reading without emphasizing their mistakes in spelling, reversed letters or punctuation" (Langa, 1996, p. 1). This allows children to experience the language process using their own abilities and proceeding at their own rate.

Phonics

Phonics remains an important component of teaching children how to read. Children need to understand how to encode and decode words as a tool to reading fluency. "Phonics is a system of teaching reading that relies on the association of sounds with letters. There is a heavy emphasis on teaching word decoding skills as a way to sound out unfamiliar words. Teachers use basal readers, which introduce skills and vocabulary words in an ordered sequence. Children move through the basal reading system by demonstrating comprehension of the skills and vocabulary used in each reader" (Langa, 1996, p.2).

Synthesis

After reviewing the literature on whole language and phonics it has been found that experts agree that a curriculum that combines both whole language and phonics is a potentially strong program capable of reaching most students. When implementing a combination of the two approaches, many learning styles are addressed:

> This 'both/and' rather than 'either/or' position has been confirmed by responsible researchers who speak in reasonable voices. For example, University of Virginia Professor Connie Juel was cited by Holdren as observing that 'the debate that has occurred over these two positions [phonics and whole language] is an artificial one. . No matter how bright, creative, and knowledgeable about oral language and the world a child may be, he or she cannot read and write well unless the code of written English is known. No matter how well the code is known, a child will not want to read or write well unless the child has been under the spell of a wonderful story or seen the value of communicating in writing (Holdren, 1995, pp.1-2).

Reading Skills

The three main verbal skills to be focused on through the Scholastic program are: (a) blending tasks; (b) phoneme segmentation; and, (c) phoneme manipulation. Students will have mastered the blending task skill when they can identify a word by hearing each syllable or phoneme pronounced separately. For example, the teacher will say th-a-t, the student will be able to verbally identify the word as *that*. The student will have mastered the phonemic segmentation skill when they are able to pronounce each phoneme separately in a one-syllable word. For example, the student will see the word *cat* and pronounce it as c-a-t. The student will have mastered the phoneme manipulation skill when they can identify the word that is left when phonemes are added, deleted or moved. For example, when the letter h is dropped from the word *hat* and a letter c is added to make the word *cat*, the student will recognize that the word has been manipulated.

The above-mentioned skills are taught/assessed in order of easiest to hardest. When this sequence is followed it will help assure mastery of these skills. The skills will be assessed through various instructional strategies (see Chapter 3).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

To enhance the reading experience, a phonics program was added to the existing literature-based first grade curriculum. All teachers would incorporate a daily phonics lesson into their literature rich day with students.

Sample Population

The study was conducted from August of 1999 to January of 2000. There were 121 first graders in the district, divided into six classrooms. Of the 121 students, 36 were below the pre-primer level. These students were only able to identify 9 (or fewer) of the 45 pre-primer words on the assessment (below). Once the 36 students were identified, the following factors were considered: birthdate, ethnicity, new students to district, gender, and special services provided (see Fig. 1, p. 9). These areas were considered to determine if a common problem/factor existed. For example, if all students experiencing difficulty shared the common factor of being new to the district this, might explain why they were not performing successfully. As evident from Figure 1, the two major discrepancies were gender and birthdate.

Student Assessment

Students were administered a reading assessment before the Scholastic Program was implemented. The same assessment was also administered after the 36th book was completed to determine growth and/or improvement. The reading assessment identified the level of performance regarding knowledge both prior to and after program

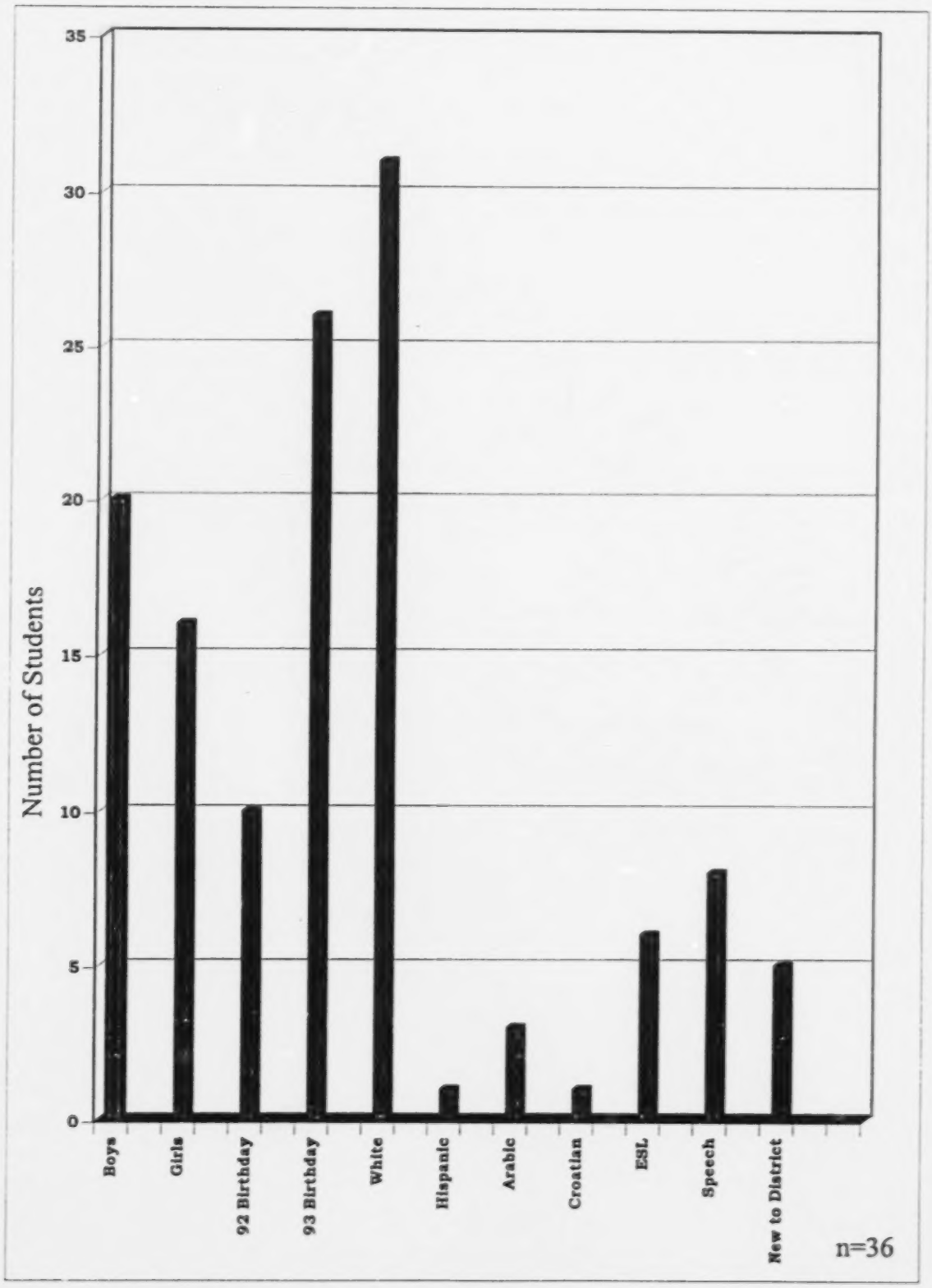

Figure 1: Targeted Population, Demographics

implementation. This assessment included letter identification, word identification, concepts of print, and words in context, as described below:

1) The Letter Identification portion of the test included verbally recognizing all upper and lower case letters as well as saying the sound of each letter of the alphabet.

2) Word Identification included 3 lists of words: Pre-Primer, Primer, and Level 1 words. Each list contained 45 sight words. To advance to the next level, a student must recognize at least 36 out of the 45 words.

3) The assessment tested concepts of print, which required students to recognize certain words after repeated reading. Concepts of print includes identifying the front and back of the book, knowing the front of the book from the back, being able to track while being read to, etc.

4) Finally, the assessment evaluated using words in context. This portion of the test included introducing a story to the child through the use of pictures and discussion. Students must read the story aloud without verbal prompts from the instructor. If the student successfully read 25 out of 30 words, he/she moved on to the next story where the criterion is 62 out of 72 words. Students successfully read those two passages were given an independent Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) which determined their current reading level (See QRI form, Appendix A).

While the terms phonemes, phonemic awareness and phonics are often used interchangeably, it is important to note that there is a difference between them. Listed below are definitions for the previous terms:

Note: All letters written with quotation marks are to be read as the name of the letter (e.g., "a" as in ate). All letters written with a slash before and after the letter are to be read as the sound of the letter (e.g., /a/ as in and).

1. Phoneme – the smallest unit of sound that can be heard in a language (e.g., "b" sounds like /b/)

2. Phonemic Awareness – the awareness of how words are structured: knowing that sounds and letters go together to make words.

(e.g., "b" "a" "t" sounds like /b/ /a/ /t/ these letters and sounds blend together in a sequence to make the word bat)

3. Phonics – the system of matching sounds we speak to printed letters that are used for writing and reading (e.g., /b/ goes with the letter symbol "b").

After the final assessment was given, information was compiled to determine the students' growth in the literature-based, phonics supplemented classroom.

The Scholastic Program

> Scholastic's systematic approach to phonics builds phonemic awareness, and blending and writing skills to provide children with the necessary foundation to become independent, skilled readers and writers. Research indicates that a critical factor in skilled, fluent reading is a child's ability to recognize letters, spelling patterns, and whole words effortlessly, automatically, and visually. Comprehension of the text depends on this ability. Scholastic Phonics Readers provide constant repetition and practice with sounds and words taught to develop this fluency. Within the context of a print-rich environment in which children are offered engaging experiences reading and listening to books, Scholastic's phonics instruction ensures that no children fall through the cracks (Scholastic, 1997).

In addition to teaching students to develop phonetic skills the Scholastic program also addressed recognition of high frequency words as well as writing fluency. Every student received an individual copy of a Hello Reader book. The Hello Reader book was

comprised of words to be decoded using phonetic skills, sight words, and illustrations (See Appendix B). The length of the pages and books increased as the books became more challenging. While there were 72 books in the entire program, 36 books were targeted for implementation. This was due to time constraints as well as the 36th book being the halfway point in the program. All students would also be reassessed at this point.

Action Plan

The teacher taught each book using the following four major components: a) develop phonemic awareness; b) high-frequency words and connect sound/symbol; c) read the story; and, d) teacher-given dictation. Each of these four aspects was completed in one class session of about 30 minutes. Activities included the following steps:

1. The teacher helped students develop phonemic awareness using a variety of instructional activities. These activities included, but were not limited to: identifying beginning and ending sounds, playing rhyming word games, listening for vowels and consonant sounds, repeating a given word without the first letter(s), and making new words by replacing the first sound in each word with a different letter (e.g., student should replace the beginning sound with a /k/, teacher says "nut," students say "cut").

2. The teacher helped students to identify high-frequency words by introducing the words on the chalkboard. Students were asked to underline the high-frequency words in a sentence. Students were then given opportunity to use high-frequency words in their own sentences.

Students were instructed on connecting sound/symbol relationships. They were also asked to generate a list of words using the same initial sound as a word on the board.

Phonograms were introduced by giving students examples and then asking them to create a list of rhyming words (word families).

3. The third step of the lesson was to read the story. Students browsed through the first few pages and the teacher pointed out unfamiliar words. Predictions were made. The story was read either aloud to the class, independently, or with a partner. There was a class discussion following the reading. Students were given the opportunity to talk about the story elements (plot, setting, character).

4. The final step of the lesson was a teacher-given dictation. Students were asked to write high-frequency words and sentences on a sheet of paper. Dictation also assessed other words that follow a phonemic skill relating to a previous lesson. [The Hello Reader books were collected and kept in a designated spot in the classroom for student use.]

Program Assessment

The growth of the targeted students was measured after examining the data collected. The data measured were letter ID of upper and lower case letters, letter sounds, and word ID of 45 pre-primer words (See Appendix B). The teaching strategies used were daily phonics lessons, reading assessments, making words activities, checklists, Venn diagrams, word walls, word games, partner reading, dictations, related literature, word sorts, cooperative group work, and word lists (See Appendix C). These teaching strategies will be discussed in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The program was implemented beginning in August, 1999 in all first grade classrooms. Due to the nature of the program, two science units were eliminated to allow the time needed for implementation. Science was not completed for the first two quarters. The teacher taught three phonics readers per week, which takes thirty minutes. The lesson is divided into four sections: develop phonemic awareness, connect sound/symbol (blending), read the story, dictate and write (See Appendix D). These strategies were used regularly. To begin the lesson the students were assembled in a common area for whole group activities. The teacher utilized a dry erase board to direct student learning. Lessons revolved around sounds letter make and connecting sound/symbol relationships. High frequency words were also introduced. Once this was completed, the children were invited to read the story. They browsed through the first few pages and pointed out what they noticed, for example, punctuation, proper nouns, high frequency words, etc. Once this was completed, the teacher dictated words and sentences to the class. Misspelled words were practiced by the student as homework. Students then were held accountable for spelling these words correctly in their daily writing.

After careful examination of the data, growth was apparent on many dimensions. Specific results for the four reading components are presented below.

Letter Identification of Uppercase Letters

In the fall, students were asked to identify the 26 uppercase letters of the alphabet by verbally naming the letter that was shown. Those students who did not know all 26

letters initially repeated this process in the spring to determine growth. Figure 2, p 16. reveals that after giving an initial test, most students already knew all 26 letters.

Letter Identification of Lowercase Letters

In the fall, students were asked to identify the 26 lowercase letters of the alphabet by verbally naming the letter that was shown. After giving the initial test, it was apparent that most students did not know all 26 letters. The students who did not know all 26 letters initially repeated this process in the spring to determine growth. Figure 3, p.17 shows that the intervention resulted in all students being able to identify all 26 letters by the spring test.

Letter Sound Recognition

In the fall, students were asked to identify the sounds of the 26 letters of the alphabet by verbally naming the sound of the letter that was shown. After giving the test, it was apparent that approximately one half of the students did not know all 26 letter sounds. All students repeated this process in the spring to determine growth. Spring testing (Fig. 4, p.18), indicates that all students were able to recognize all 26 letter sounds.

Word Identification Pre-Primer

In the fall, students were asked to identify the 45 pre-primer (see Appendix B) words by verbally naming them. After giving the test, it was apparent that almost all students could not read many of the words. This process was repeated with all students in the spring to determine growth (See Fig. 5, p. 19).

For sample assessments, see Appendix E.

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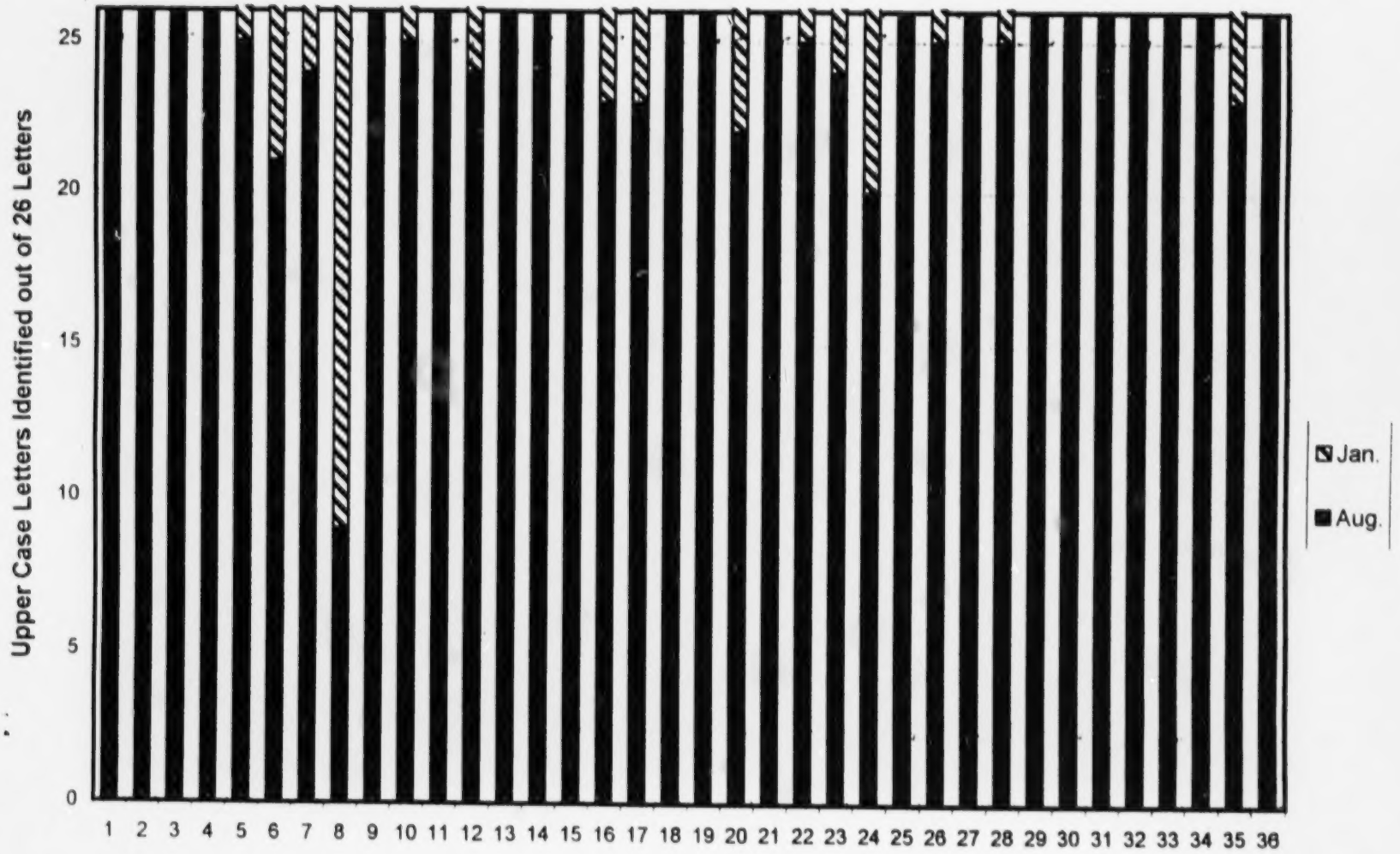

Figure 2: Letter ID Upper Case

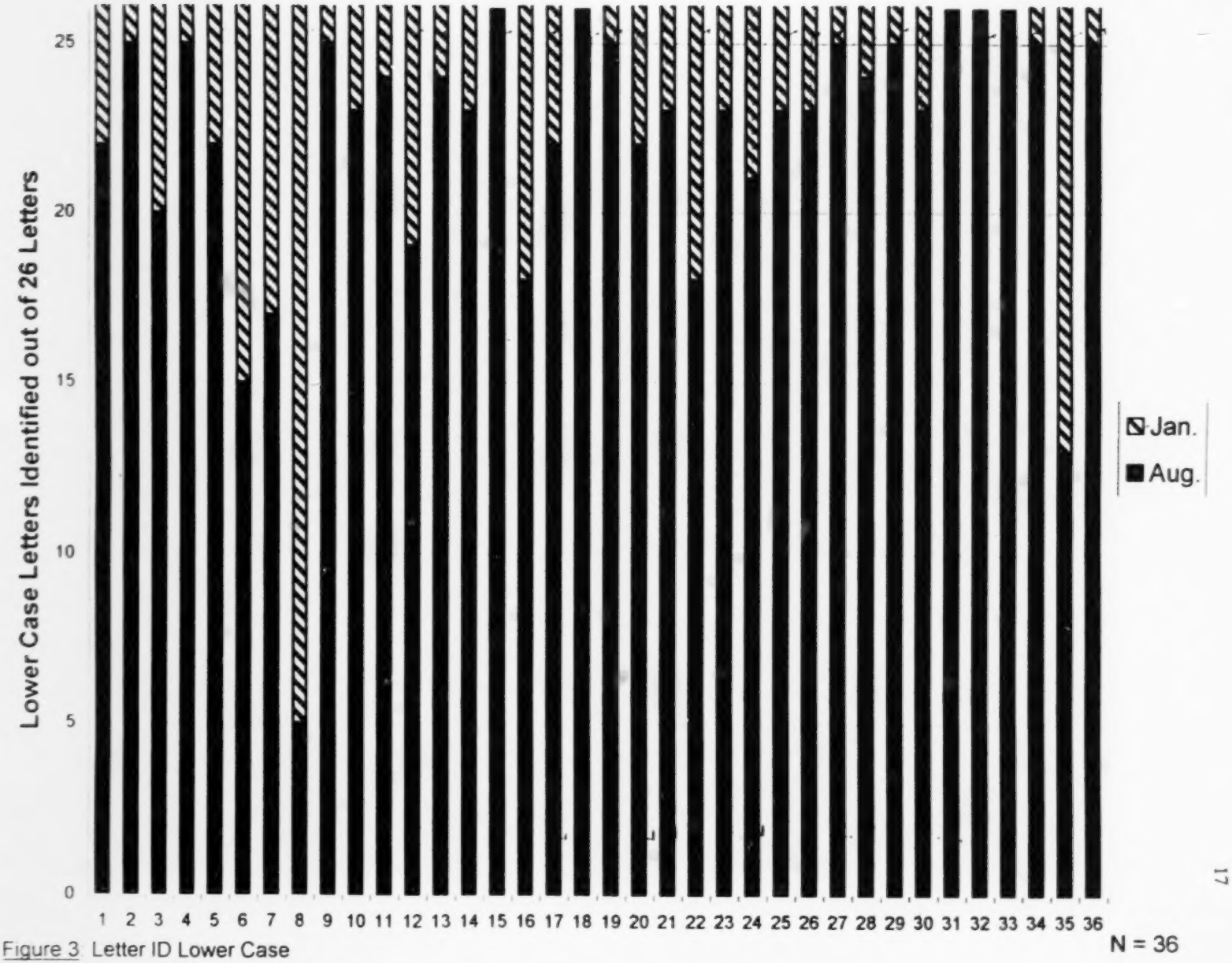

Figure 3 Letter ID Lower Case

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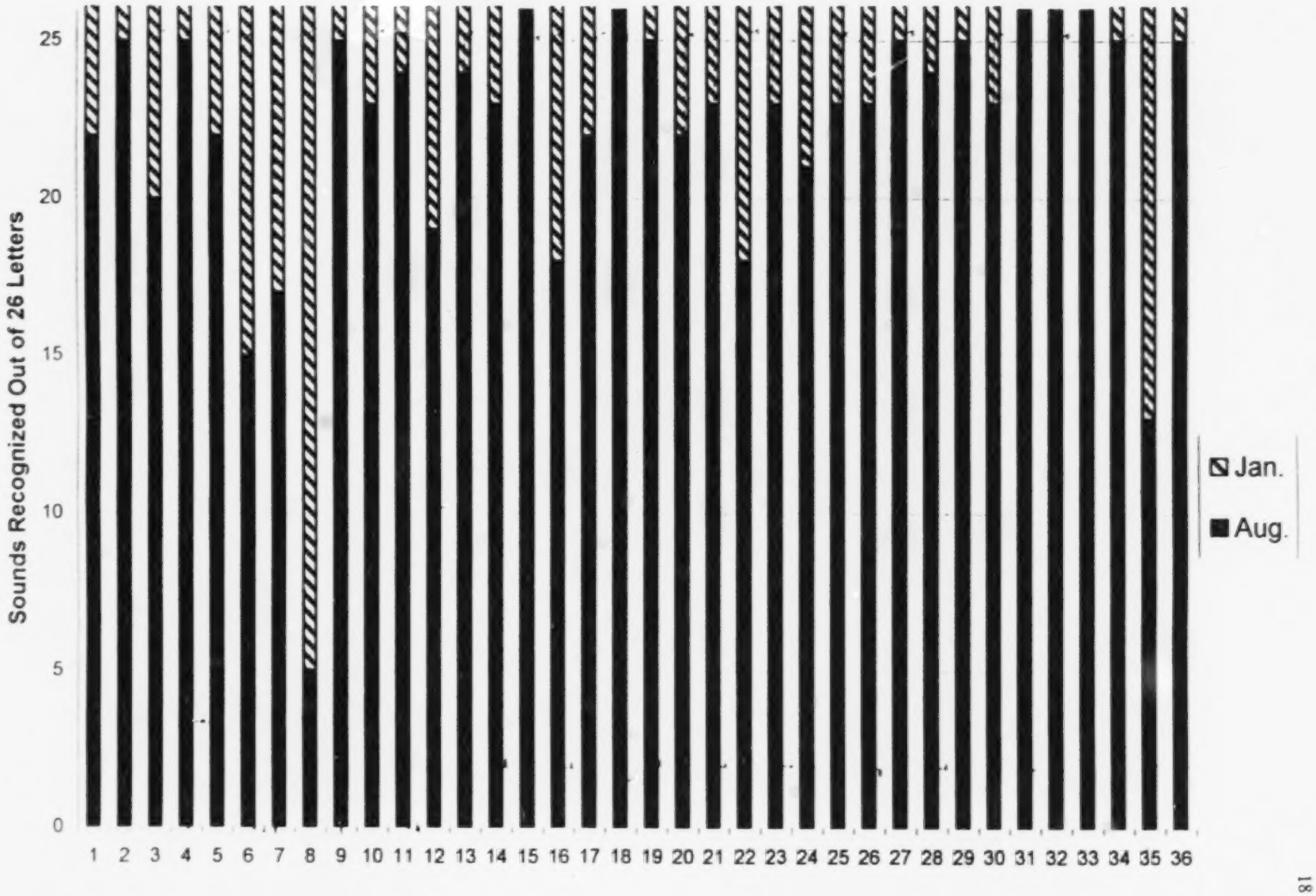

Figure 4: Letter Sound Recognition

N = 36

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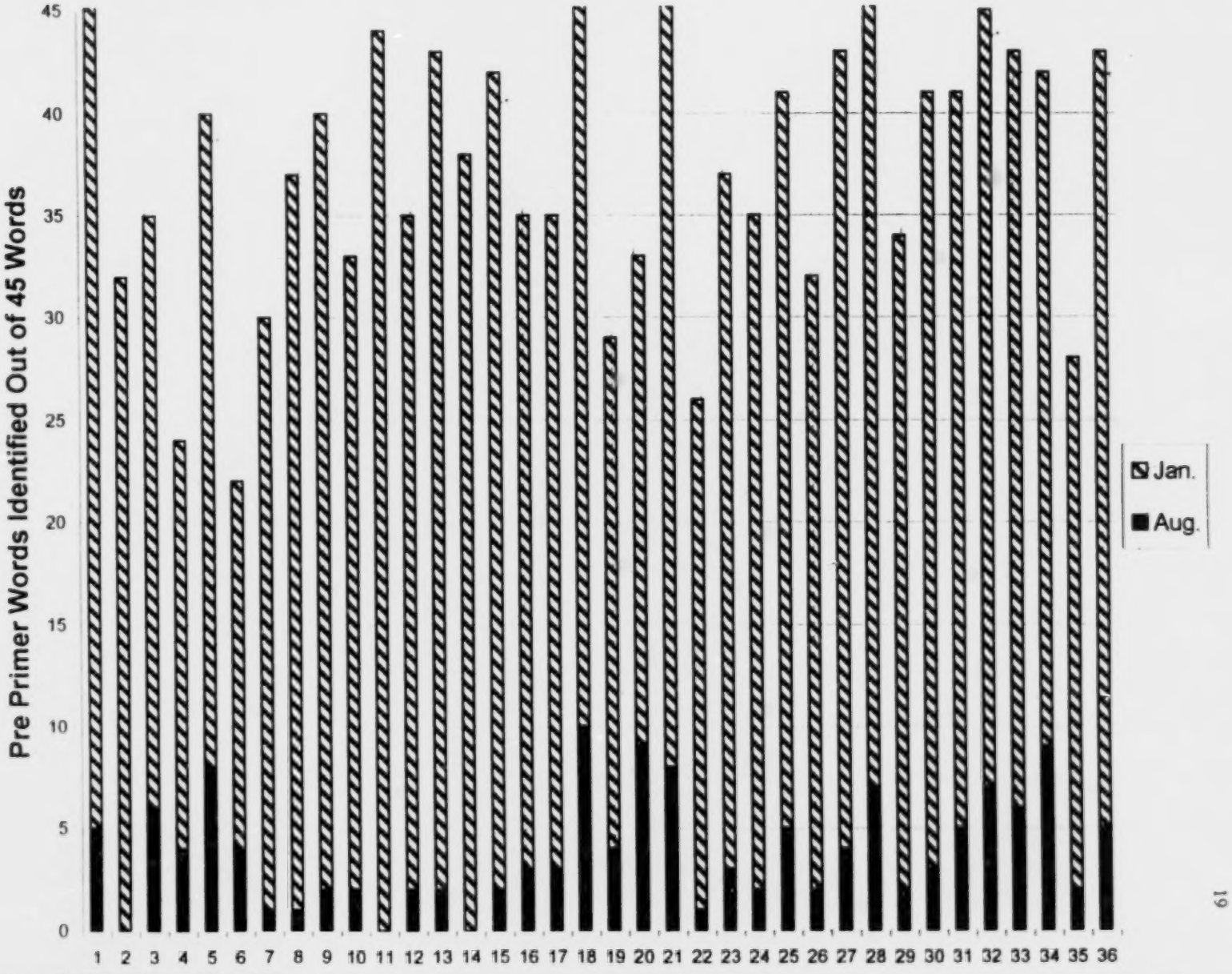

Figure 5: Pre-Primer Word ID

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Summary

Students showed growth in each of the four areas. Similar growth can be noted within the areas of upper and lower case letter identification, and letter/sound recognition. The most substantial amount of growth, however, was found for pre-primer word identification. Analysis and explanation for these findings follow below.

Discussion

A combination of factors generated these results. All students experienced success. While the addition of the Scholastic Phonics Program seems to have aided in the reading growth of the students, many other reading factors contributed. One factor may be teaching strategies (See Appendix C). A second factor may be the use of a reading specialist. The specialist takes a small group of struggling readers out of the classroom for instruction. This occurs three to five times weekly for approximately thirty minutes. A third factor may be the already rich literature-based reading program. A variety of literature is provided for children at all levels, which allows for differentiation of instruction.

Some of the strategies that were well liked by students were cooperative learning opportunities, making words, and partner reading. Cooperative learning was favored because students were able to work with each other and share their opinions and ideas without realizing they were practicing phonics skills. Cooperative learning activities were planned carefully and used as often as time would allow. The "making words" strategy was successful because the students were able to manipulate designated letters to make a variety of words and was used weekly. A third activity that was highly motivating to

students was the opportunity to read their phonics books with a partner daily. This activity gave the students a chance to read and practice their phonics skills.

While some students have a need for structure, repetitiveness and predictability within daily lessons, many students find this to be tedious and unstimulating. Due to the repetitive aspects of word sorts and certain elements of the phonics lessons, these activities became redundant and were least favored among many students.

The goal of the Scholastic Phonics Program states that when children are given opportunities to apply their developing phonics and word identification knowledge with connected text they become confident, independent readers. The students' experience correlated with the goal of the program. Given the data collected, students have become more confident and independent readers. This is evident through the following: increased oral reading, appropriate self-selection of books, frequent use of school and classroom libraries, and exhibiting a desire to read both independently or with a partner.

Consistent use of reading strategies, the importance placed on reading skills, and the use of the phonics program contributed to a balanced approach to teaching reading. When all of these components are incorporated into a balanced approach, students can achieve optimum learning. The rich, literature-based reading curriculum was enhanced through the use of the Scholastic Phonics Program. The addition of this program helped to teach students basic phonemic skills, which became a stepping-stone for them to achieve higher-level reading skills. Once these reading skills are in place, students read with confidence and fluency.

The reason that the program can be considered successful is due to the amount of growth the targeted population has made. All of the targeted students can identify all of

the upper case and lower case letters, recognize all 26 letter sounds, and can read at least 22 out of the 45 pre-primer words. In past years this amount of growth has been made by the end of the year, whereas the targeted students have accomplished this goal by January.

Recommendations

To obtain a balanced approach to teaching reading with successful gains, it is recommended that teachers incorporate a variety of strategies. A combination of literature with a consistent phonics program throughout the grade level has been recognized to be most successful. The set-up of the program allows many different teachers at the same grade level to teach phonemic lessons while exposing students to the same material. It is recommended that a highly structured phonics program be implemented into the literature-based classroom. It would also be recommended that a variety of teaching strategies be implemented into a balanced program to ensure that the needs of all the learners are being met and all students challenged.

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APPENDICES

8 Administration and Scoring of the *Qualitative Reading Inventory–II*

Assessment of Prior Knowledge

Assessing Prior Knowledge

Conceptual-Questions Task
Prediction Task

Assessing Prior Knowledge

Because students' knowledge has such a powerful effect upon comprehension, it is important to determine if the selection read by the student contains familiar or unfamiliar concepts. Understanding what students know and do not know about important concepts or ideas in the selection allows the examiner to evaluate comprehension difficulties in relation to students' knowledge base. The *QRI*–II provides two methods for assessing prior knowledge: conceptual questions and predictions. Before reading a passage, a student should be asked to participate in one or both activities in order to assess his/her familiarity with the topic of the selection. A student's lack of knowledge of the concepts, or a knowledge of the concepts that differs from that of the text may explain difficulty in comprehension. Engaging in the conceptual questions and/or prediction tasks prior to reading can also serve to activate any background knowledge that the student has for the information contained in the selection. If this knowledge is consistent with text information, facilitation of comprehension will occur.

Conceptual-Questions Task

General Procedures. For each passage there are three or four questions judged to be important to the comprehension of the passage. The content of

the questions were chosen because they represented the topic of the selection (e.g., a class trip, uses of computers, soccer), or because they represented who the selection was about (e.g., Martin Luther King or Amelia Earhart). Other questions were designed because we believed that if students understood them, they would be more likely to answer the implicit comprehension questions correctly (e.g., animal defenses in the fifth-grade "Octopus" passage, and changing seasons in the second-grade "Seasons" passage).

The questions are on the examiner's copy of the passage, directly under the title of the passage. Before the student reads the passage, the examiner should ask all questions. The examiner should ask all questions for each passage that the student reads.

Instructions for the concept-question task are, "Before you read, I want to know what you already know about some ideas in the text. I will ask you a few questions to find out."

Scoring the Concept-Questions Task. Each question is scored according to a 3–2–1–0 system, where 3 is the best score. The examiner can use the following guidelines for assigning scores.

3 Points:
A precise definition, or a definitional response to a phrase, or an answer to a question specifically related to passage content.
Examples:
What does "learning to read" mean to you?: pronouncing and understanding words
Why do people work?: to get money for their families
When do you see turtles outside?: in summer when it's hot, because turtles like the sun.
What do flowers need to grow?: sunlight, water, and food
What are the problems with living in the desert?: it's very hot and there's little water.
Who was Christopher Columbus?: a man who sailed the ocean and found America
What is Washington, D.C.?: where our nation's capital is and national laws are made there.
How do companies make a profit?: they make more money than they spend.
What happens to products after recycling?: they get made into other things.
What is circumnavigation?: to sail around the world

A Synonym
Examples:
What does "trade" mean to you?: to bargain
What are claws?: nails
What is fall?: autumn

2 Points: **An Example of the Concept**
Examples:
What does "doing something new" mean to you?: getting a new toy and playing with it
Where do people work?: at hospitals
What is working at home?: cleaning house, washing dishes
What does "being afraid of animals" mean to you?: grizzly bear
What is "racism"?: people who don't like black people because they are black
"What are changes in computers?": they can do things faster
What are animal defenses?: bite; spit; hunch their backs
What are evils of slavery?: people telling others what to do and whipping them

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A Specific Attribute or Defining Characteristics
Examples:
What is a Mom?: a human being, someone who takes care of you
What is a bear?: furry with a black nose
What is an octopus?: thing with eight legs with suction cups
How is steel made?: from iron
What is an earthquake?: when the earth shakes
What is circumnavigation?: to circle around something
What is a saint?: someone recognized for being very good

A Function
Examples:
What is a class trip?: learn something new
What is taking notes?: so you remember something
Why do people use maps?: to find their way
What is Washington, D.C.?: city where Martin Luther King, Jr. did his "I have a Dream" speech
What are diamonds?: people put them in rings
What is the purpose of recycling?: to use something again

***1 Point:* A General Association**
Examples:
What does "going to work" mean to you?: leaving the house
What does "trade" mean to you?: you trade something
Who was Constantine?: a man who lived long ago
Who was Sacajawea?: an Indian name
What is laser light?: beams of light flying all over
What does "size of earthquakes" mean to you?: big
Who were Lewis and Clark?: men

Isolation of Prefix, Suffix, or Root Word
Examples:
What is circumnavigation?: circumference
What is archaeology?: archaeologist
What is an octopus?: eight
What is ultrasound?: a noise

Firsthand, Personal Associations
Examples:
What does "people reading stories" mean to you?: baby sister picks them
What does "learning to read" mean to you? I learned to read in first grade.
What is a school trip?: my mother came on our field trip.
What does "an old house for sale" mean to you?: we just sold our house.
What are new toys?: I get new toys for Christmas.
What are firtworks?: I get bottle rockets.

***0 Points:* Sound-Alikes**
Examples:
What is a bear?: wear
What is fall?: wall

Unconnected Responses
Examples:
What does "looking for something" mean to you?: Batman
Who was Martin Luther King?: wears a crown

No Response or I Don't Know

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Interpreting the Concept-Question Scores. Generally we have found that students who score at least 55% of the points possible on the concept task score above 70% on comprehension questions on the related passage. See Section 16 for details.

Prediction Task

General Procedures. After administration of the concept-question task, the examiner may choose to administer the prediction task. If so, the examiner should say, "Given that the title of the passage is _____, and it includes the ideas _____, _____, _____, and _____ (naming all the concepts within the questions), what do you think the passage will be about? I want you to take a guess or make a prediction about what you think the passage will be about." For example, on the third grade selection, "A Trip to the Zoo," the instructions would be phrased, "Given that the title of the passage is, 'A Trip to the Zoo,' and it has the ideas 'class trip,' 'taking notes,' 'being by yourself,' and 'why people use maps,' what do you think the story will be about?" If the student simply restates the title of the passage, the examiner should provide a *general* probe for more information. For example, if the student says "Amelia Earhart," say "What about 'Amelia Earhart?'"

Scoring the Prediction Task. Leslie and Cooper (1993) examined three ways of scoring the prediction task and found that one of them significantly correlated with retelling and comprehension among sixth-graders. Further piloting of the task at other reading levels and ages found that the same method of scoring was related to retelling and/or comprehension at second- and third- grade reading levels. Thus, we have chosen to score the prediction task by counting the number of idea statements the student predicts that are contained in the passage either explicitly or implicitly. By idea statements we mean any proposition (verb and accompanying nouns) contained in the selection or implied by the selection. The following list provides students' predictions and our scoring from passages at diverse levels. The idea statements are in italics.

***Pre-primer Story:* "Just Like Mom"**

2 Ideas:

—*Mom is going to work*, and having a good day. Dad is doing something at the end. *The girl does everything the Mom does.*

—*Mom is working at home* and *going to work.*

1 Idea:

—*Mom is working.*

—What a mom is and *mom going to work.*

—*Working with Mom*

0 Ideas:

—Mom

***Primer Story:* "The Pig Who Learned to Read"**

2 Ideas:

—*The pig that just learned to read* and *he liked it.*

—*A pig that heard people read;* and *learned to read.*

1 Idea:

—*a pig learning how to read*

—*a pig that learns to read*

0 Ideas:

—the pig who told the boy how to read

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***Primer Story:* "Who Lives Near Lakes?"**
1 Idea:
—*People who live near lakes*
0 Ideas:
—fish

***First-Level Story:* "The Bear and the Rabbit"**
3 Ideas:
—*Having no one to play with; the bunny would be afraid of the bear;* and *will make friends.*
2 Ideas:
—*It's about a bear and a rabbit; the rabbit is scared of the bear.*
1 Idea:
—*it's about friendship.*
—*about a rabbit that's scared of animals*

***First-Level Passage:* "What You Eat"**
1 Idea:
—*different kinds of foods*
—*trying to keep healthy*

***Second-Level Passage:* "What Can I Get for my Toy?"**
1 Idea:
—*person getting toys*
—*a kid who wants to trade for toys*

***Second-Level Passage:* "Whales and Fish"**
2 Ideas:
—*how fish get born; how animals live in the sea*
1 Idea:
—*animals in the sea*

***Third-Level Passage:* "A Trip to the Zoo"**
5 Ideas:
—*Somebody is going to a zoo on a field trip gets lost; looks at a map; and finds his way back*
3 Ideas:
—*taking a trip;* and *taking notes;* and *having a map for directions*
1 Idea:
—*about going to the zoo*
0 Ideas:
—things you can see, touch, or use

***Third-Level Passage:* "Cats: Lions and Tigers in Your House"**
1 Idea:
—*cats protecting themselves lions, tigers, and cat families*
0 Ideas:
—cats

***Fifth-Level Passage:* "Martin Luther King, Jr."**
3 Ideas:
—*Washington, D.C., where the marches are; segregation;* and *what Martin Luther King did for black people*
2 Ideas:
—*why blacks and whites didn't like each other back then* and *what Martin Luther King did about it*

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1 Idea:
—*his life and what he wanted to do*

Fifth-Level Passage: **"Getting Rid of Trash"**
3 Ideas:
—*about taking trash; recycling it;* and *made it into other things*
1 Idea:
—*trash and recycling it*

Sixth-Level Passage: **"Andrew Carnegie"**
2 Ideas:
—*a man who made steel;* and *made a lot of money*
1 Idea:
—*how steel is made* and they raise money; *about a steel-making factory*

Sixth-Level Passage: **"Earthquakes"**
1 Idea:
—*about earthquakes and how animals can tell if they're coming*
—*how animals sense earthquakes*

Junior High Passage: **"Lewis and Clark"**
2 Ideas:
—*two people exploring* or *going a great distance; Lewis and Clark going North;* and an *expedition* mapping the U.S.

Interpretation of the Prediction Scores. As you can see from the predictions made by students, most students only gave one or two idea statements in their predictions. There seems to be three qualities of predictions. First, there are young readers, who only restate the title and do not integrate the concepts at all. Second, there are students who integrate some of the concepts and make a prediction using them. For example, on "A Trip to the Zoo," a student predicts, "taking a trip and taking notes and having a map for directions." Finally, there is the occasional student who is so knowledgeable about the concepts that a prediction is made that sums up many main ideas contained in the selection. For example, a sixth-grade student who read the junior high passage, "Diamonds," and predicted "It's about how diamonds are mined deep in the earth, and how they are formed by great pressure. It probably describes what diamonds come from; I think it's carbon. Then it probably describes what diamonds are used for, like in jewelry."

In summary, predictions should be evaluated in light of the above examples, which are from our pilot data of average readers. Qualitative judgements can be made by examining whether or not students have integrated any of the concepts with the title in order to make predictions. Recognize that this skill, like all other skills, is learned, and is subject to instruction. If we want children to make good predictions, we have to teach them how by modeling.

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Pre-Primer Words

can	be	it	big
come	down	me	funny
find	have	see	he
go	jump	up	little
you	may	help	no
I	not	a	with
is	what	and	want
blue	for	here	in
look	make	play	red
run	thank	the	this
us	we	will	work
away			

Teaching Strategies

Daily Phonics Lessons – The daily lessons include 4 aspects.

1) An introduction which develops phonemic awareness
2) Verbal instruction which addresses connecting the sound/symbol relationship of the sound being taught
3) Reading the new story
4) End with a dictation where students are required to write the words they have just learned.

Reading Assessments – Students will be assessed at various points during the school year; August, January and April. The assessments will test for identification of upper case letters, identification of lower case letters, letter sounds, identification of pre-primer level words, identification of primer level words, and identification of first grade words.

Making Words Activities – Students will take part in an activity which they are given 6-8 letters. They will manipulate the letters to make various words. Students begin by making small 2-3 letter words, pattern words, words with 4 or more letters, and end by making the big word which all of the letters make together. (P. Cunningham)

Related Literature – The teacher can integrate other related literature into the Phonics Lessons. (ie. When teaching book # 51, Dinosaur Hall, the teacher can include other literature about dinosaurs that will interest the students)

Venn Diagrams – After reading book #38, The Pancake Man, the teacher can read a version of The Gingerbread Man. The students can create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the two stories.

Word Walls – The teacher will designate a particular area in the classroom for a word wall. The word wall will be labeled with all of the letters in the alphabet. High frequency words can be included on this word wall for future reference in the classroom.

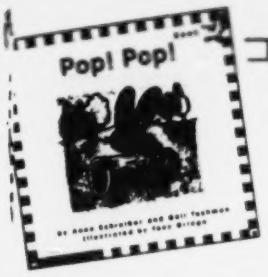
Partner Reading – The students are able to share the books they are given with a partner-taking turns reading and following along.

Dictations – At the end of a Phonics Lesson, the boys and girls will be read words that were introduced to them as well as sentences with the words in them. They will be asked to write these on paper.

Word Sorts – The students will be given a list of words. They will separate the words into various categories either assigned by the teacher or determined by the students. (ie. words ending with –in, words with –an).

Cooperative Group Work – Many of the activities listed here can be done with a partner or a small group.

Word Games – As new sounds are introduced the students can work together as a group to list words with a designated sound in them. The lists are then shared with other groups in the classroom.



Book 15

Pop! Pop!

1 Develop Phonemic Awareness

Explain to children that they are going to play a consonant riddle game. You will say a word. They are to think of a word that rhymes with your word and starts with /p/.

Sample

Teacher: What rhymes with *sat* and starts with /p/?

Children: pat

Continue with these riddles:

What rhymes with *men* and starts with /p/? (*pen*)

What rhymes with *sit* and starts with /p/? (*pit*)

What rhymes with *teach* and starts with /p/? (*peach*)

What rhymes with *rocket* and starts with /p/? (*pocket*)

2 Connect Sound/Symbol

Introduce the Sound: /p/p Explain to children that the letter *p* stands for /p/ as in the word *pan*. Write the word on the chalkboard, and have a volunteer circle the letter *p*. Ask children to suggest other words that contain /p/. List these words on the chalkboard, and have volunteers circle the letter *p* in each one.

Introduce the Phonogram: -og
Write the phonogram *-og* on the chalkboard. Point out the sound this phonogram stands for. Add the letter *l* to the beginning of *-og*, and blend the word formed. Have children repeat the word *log* aloud as you blend the word again.

Ask children to suggest words that rhyme with *log*. List these on the chalkboard, and have volunteers underline the phonogram *-og* in each one. Be sure to include the words *hog, fog, jog, frog,* and *dog*. Encourage children to look for the word part *-og* as they read.

Introduce the High-Frequency Words: in, my, them Write the high-frequency words *in, my,* and *them* in sentences on the chalkboard. Underline the words and ask children if they recognize them. If necessary, read the sentences again. Write the sentence "I see them in my van" on the chalkboard, and have children read it aloud. Then ask volunteers to dictate other sentences using the high-frequency words. Write the sentences on the chalkboard, and have a volunteer circle the high-frequency words in each. You might also wish to review the high-frequency words *on* and *like*.

Blend Words To practice using the sound, phonogram, and high-frequency words introduced, list the following words and sentence on the chalkboard. Have volunteers blend each word and read the sentence aloud.

- pan pop pat
- hip lip tap
- log hog mop
- The hog sat on my lap.

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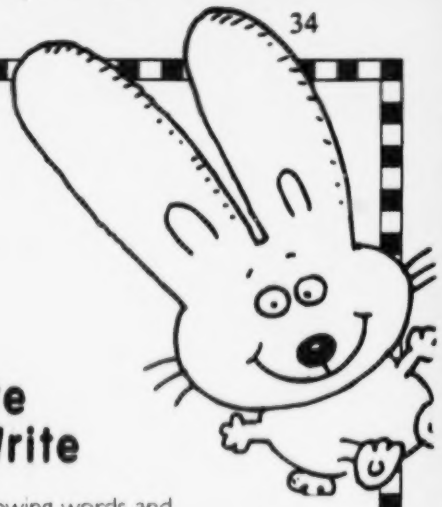

Sound Introduced: /p/*p*

Phonogram: *-og*

High-Frequency Words:
in, my, them

3 Read the Story

Preview Preview Phonics Reader 15. Have a volunteer read aloud the title. Invite children to browse through the first few pages of the story and comment on anything they notice. Suggest that they point out any unfamiliar words. Help children blend these words. Then have children predict what they think the story might be about.

Reading Options Read the story as a class. Call on volunteers to take turns reading aloud, one page at a time. Encourage them to help each other with blending difficulties. Use prompts such as the following to help children who need extra support while reading:

- **Do the pictures give you any clues?**
- **Are there any word parts you know?**

You might wish to reread the story as a choral reading or have pairs reread it independently. Have children reread the story in subsequent days to develop fluency.

Reflect and Respond Invite children to share what they liked about the story. Encourage them to write in their Journals how the rabbit was a good friend.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

ASSESS READING

To assess their understanding of the story, ask children questions such as:

- ✔ What does the bird do on the log? (*tap*)
- ✔ What does the skunk do on the log? (*mop*)
- ✔ What sound does the rain make when it hits the log? (*pit-pat*)

4 Dictate and Write

Dictate the following words and sentence. Have children write the words and sentence on a sheet of paper. When completed, write the words and sentence on the chalkboard and have children make any necessary corrections on their papers.

- pad log hat
- I like to hop.

OPTION

Writing Extension

- Ask children to draw pictures of unusual places to hide from the rain. Then have them dictate labels for each picture, using as many /p/ and *-og* words as possible.

Encourage children to take Phonics Reader 15 home to share with their families.

See Phonics and Word Building Kit for additional activities.

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Pop! Pop!

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65

Book 14

Pop! Pop!

by Anne Schreiber and Gail Tuchman
Illustrated by Tony Griego

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My Words

* in
* my
* them

Pp

pit-pat	mop
pop	mops
hop	tap
hops	taps

-og

log

*new high frequency words

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36

Pop! Pop!

99

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Pop! Pop on my log.

I like to pop on my log.

2

Pop! Pop in my log.

I like them in my log.

7

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Pop! Pop!

Tap! Tap on my log.

Who taps on my log?

Cut along dotted line.

Pit-Pat on my log.

Pop! Tap! Hop! Mop!

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Hop! Hop on my log.

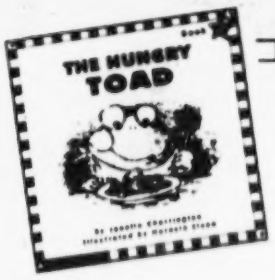
Who hops on my log?

4

Mop! Mop on my log.

Who mops on my log?

5



Book 59

The Hungry Toad

1 Develop Phonemic Awareness

Explain to children that they are going to make new words by using /ō/ to replace the first vowel sound in each word you say. For example, if you say the word *ate*, children are to say *oat*. Remind children that some of the words will be nonsense, or made-up, words.

Sample

Teacher: ache

Children: oak

Use these and other words:

egg	if	easy	under
again	about	apple	umbrella

2 Connect Sound/Symbol

Introduce the Sound: Vowel /ō/ (*oa*) Explain to children that the letters *oa* stand for /ō/ as in the word *goat*. Write the word *goat* on the chalkboard, and have a volunteer circle the letters *oa*. Ask children to suggest other words that contain /ō/. List these words on the chalkboard, and have volunteers circle the letters *oa* in words containing this spelling for the long *o* sound.

Introduce the High-Frequency Words: again, better, I'd, park Write the high-frequency words *again, better, I'd,* and *park* in sentences on the chalkboard. Underline the words, and ask children if they recognize them. If necessary, read the sentences again. Point out that the word *I'd* is a shortened way to write the words *I would*. Ask volunteers to dictate sentences using the high-frequency words. Write the sentences on the chalkboard, and have a volunteer circle the high-frequency words. The story also contains the Story Words *bar, doctor, football,* and *toaster*. Write these words on the chalkboard, read them aloud, and discuss their meanings.

Blend Words To practice using the sound and high-frequency words introduced, list the following words and sentences on the chalkboard. Have volunteers read each aloud.

- go got goat grow
- road coat groan throat
- more there was out
- "I'd like more toast," said Sandy.
- "I hope the doctor will help me feel better," groaned Rick.

Intervention Throughout the week, review the sound/spellings previously taught. See page 12 for details.

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Sound Introduced:
Vowel /ō/ (*oa*)

High-Frequency Words:
again, better, I'd, park

3 Read the Story

Preview Preview Phonics Reader 59. Have a volunteer read aloud the title. Invite children to browse through the first few pages of the story and to comment on anything they notice. Suggest that they point out any unfamiliar words. Read these words aloud as the children blend them. Then have children predict what they think the story might be about.

Reading Options Read the story aloud as children follow along. Then have volunteers take turns reading aloud a page at a time. You may wish to have small groups reread the story independently. Assign each child a page. Circulate among the children and informally assess their reading. Provide time for children to reread the story in subsequent days to develop fluency and increase reading rate.

Reflect and Respond Have children share their reactions to the story. Encourage them to create their own lists of things Toad should not eat.

4 Dictate and Write

Dictate the following words and sentence. Have children write the words and sentence on a sheet of paper. When completed, write the words and sentence on the chalkboard and have children make any necessary corrections on their papers.

- so soap silly
- more girl you
- Do you like my yellow coat?

OPTION

Writing Extension

- Have students imagine that they are doing the family's shopping for this week. Have them generate a list of foods or other items they will need for the week. Suggest that they compare their lists. What things will they all buy?

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

ASSESS READING

To assess their understanding of the story, ask children questions such as:

- ✔ What does Toad like to do? (*eat*)
- ✔ Why did the doctor make a list for Toad? (*Toad kept eating things he shouldn't eat.*)
- ✔ Why didn't Toad eat the boat? (*It was too big.*)

See Phonics and Word Building Kit for additional activities.

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Book

THE HUNGRY TOAD

by Janelle Cherrington
Illustrated by Horacio Elana

56

My Words

*again
*better
*I'd
*park

oa

boat	road
coat	soap
croak	throat
foam	toad
groaned	

55

Story Words: bar, doctor, football, toaster

***new high frequency words**

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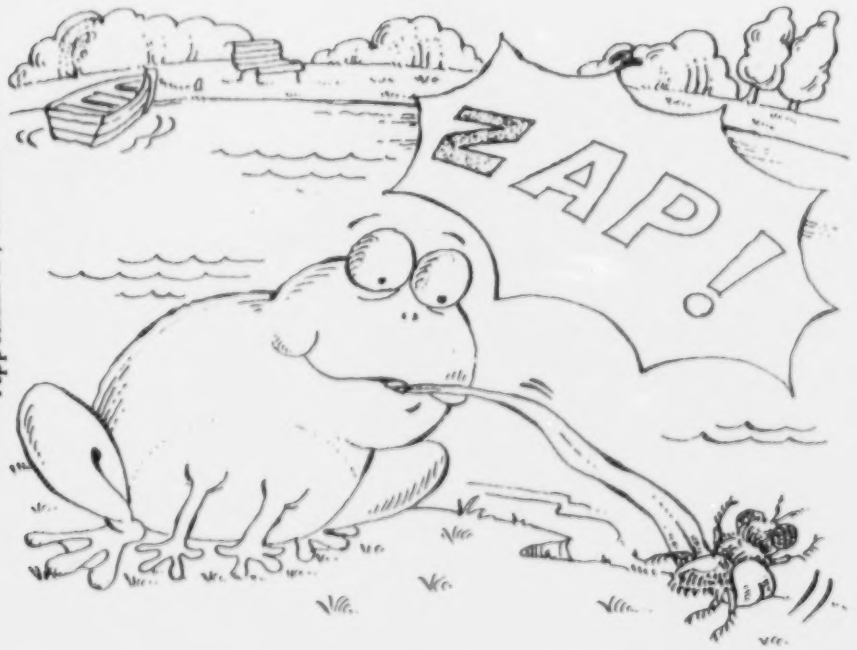
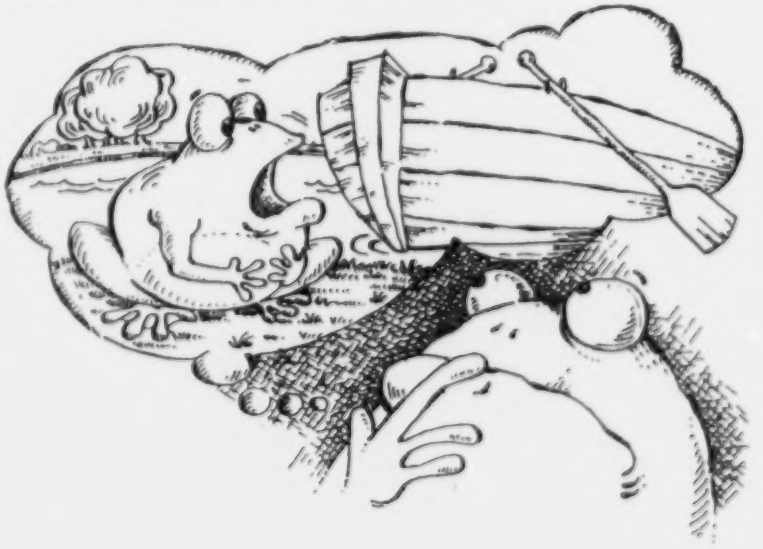


There was once a toad named Toad.

"A boat is not on my list," he said. "Can I eat a boat?"



"Nope. I'd better not."

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The next day Toad ate and ate,
but he was still hungry.

He looked around. He saw a
rowboat. He checked his list.

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Toad was always hungry.
He ate and ate and ate, but he
always wanted more.

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Appendix D, continued

Like most toads, he could puff out his throat to croak. His throat could get very, very big.

4

61

The doctor was very mad! "What toad eats coats? No one eats coats," she groaned.

13

62

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The next day Toad ate and ate,
but he was still hungry.

He met his friend. Gulp! Toad
ate her coat.

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One day Toad ate and ate,
but he was still hungry.

Then he saw a bar of soap.
Gulp! It got stuck in his throat.

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Appendix D, continued

So Toad hopped down the road to see the doctor.

"A toad does not eat soap," said the doctor as she took it out.

The doctor was mad.

"Give me your list," she said.

"I must add something to it!"

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The next day Toad ate and ate, but he was still hungry.

He went to the park. Gulp! Toad ate a big foam football!

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The next day Toad ate and ate, but he was still hungry.

He saw a toaster. Gulp! It got stuck in his throat.

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Appendix D, continued

The doctor said, "Toads do not eat toasters, and toads do not eat soap! I will make a list for you. Don't eat these things again!"

8

9

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Appendix E

Reading Assessment

Student_____

Date_____Age_____Birthdate_____

Address_____

Home Phone_____

1. Letter Identification
   Upper Case_____/26 Letter Sounds_____/26
   Lower Case_____/26

2. Word Identification
   Preprimer_____/45
   Primer_____/45
   First Grade_____/45
   Score of 36 or below, do not advance to next level.

3. Concepts of Print
   Sandcastle_____(criterion for success=12)

4. Words in Context
   PP2 Sam (30 words)_____(criterion for success =25)
   PP3 My Big Dog Max (72 words)_____(criterion for success =62)

5. IRI (if indicated)
   Independent _____
   Instructional_____
   Frustration_____

6. Comments::_____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Form A

O H S E G P

X V I M J D K

B T R Z F N

Y Q W C U A L

b x e c j m

l u r t q h y

s d o a k w

i p v f n z g

Word List

Score ___/45

Pre-Primer

Can
It
Come
Me
Find
See
Go
Up
You
Help
I
A
Is
And
Blue
For
Here
In
Look
Make
Play
Red
Run
Thank
The
This
Us
We
Will
Work
Away
be
big
down
funny
have
he
jump
little
may
no
not
with
what
want

Score_____/45

Primer

about
all
am
an
are
bring
brown
but
cold
came
called
do
did
eat
every
from
gave
get
good
give
green
had
her
his
into
kind
laugh
like
must
my
new
of
old
on
one
our
out
pretty
put
ran
ride
said
saw
she
so

Score____/45

Level 1

they
three
white
yes
your
was
went
after
again
as
ask
ate
best
buy
could
cut
fast
going
get
has
him
how
it
just
know
let
many
much
now
open
over
please
read
say
show
there
then
today
two
walk
well
were
when
where
wish